

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 324 800

EA 022 329

AUTHOR Radnofsky, Mary L.; And Others
TITLE Restructured Schools, Tracking Classroom Effects: Teachers' Perceptions.
PUB DATE Apr 90
NOTE 37p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Boston, MA, April 16-20, 1990).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Environment; Educational Improvement; Educational Innovation; Educational Quality; Elementary Secondary Education; Instructional Effectiveness; Learning Strategies; Participative Decision Making; School Based Management; *School Restructuring; Student Responsibility; Teacher Administrator Relationship; *Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Effectiveness; *Teacher Responsibility; *Teacher Role; Teacher Student Relationship; Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

Teachers' perceptions of school restructuring were examined to determine the effects of reform on actual classroom teaching and learning processes. Interviews with 14 teachers at all school levels identified the following common themes: importance of flexible schedules; inclusion of interdisciplinary, meaningful curricula; and increased teacher control of the teaching and learning process. A recommendation is made for the inclusion of teachers' views if the goal of restructuring is enhancement of student learning. (21 references) (LMI)

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Restructured Schools, Tracking Classroom
Effects: Teachers' Perceptions

Mary L. Radnofsky
Carolyn M. Evertson
Joseph Murphy

Vanderbilt University and
The National Center for Educational Leadership

Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the
American Educational Research Association

April 1990, Boston

Support for this research was provided by the National Center for Educational Leadership (NCEL) under U.S. Department of Education Contract No. R117C8005. The views in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the sponsoring institution nor the Universities in the NCEL Consortium--The University of Chicago, Harvard University, and Vanderbilt University.

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Radnofsky, M., Evertson, C., & Murphy, J. (1990) Restructured schools, tracking classroom effects: Teachers' perspectives. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, MA.

The virtual absence of attention to restructuring the teaching-learning process in the midst of vast school reform is perplexing and disconcerting. A considerable body of research on effective teaching lies largely untapped in most school reform reports and recommendations, but an equally disturbing fact is that the **voice of the classroom teacher** also remains essentially unheard. This study of teachers' perceptions of school restructuring begins to give body to the voices of teachers, who have potentially the most influential role in contributing both to the knowledge base on teaching and to the knowledge growth of their students. In fourteen separate interviews, the investigators identified several common themes echoed by each of the teachers, including the importance of flexible schedules; interdisciplinary, meaningful curricula; and increased teacher control of the teaching-learning process. If the purpose of restructuring is to improve student learning, then the view from the inside of the teaching-learning process is essential towards understanding which implemented changes will and will not affect the students.

DRAFT 9/2/90

RESTRUCTURED SCHOOLS, TRACKING CLASSROOM EFFECTS: TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

Teachers probably know what individual students need to succeed better than decision-makers who are far removed from the classroom. (Harvey & Crandall, 1988, p.31)

Beginning with the release of three highly influential reform documents in 1986 (Carnegie Forum, 1986; Holmes Group, 1986; National Governors' Association, 1986), the current era of educational reform shifted directions, from repair of the existing infrastructure of schooling to restructuring the entire educational enterprise (see Murphy, 1990a). Serious endeavors to transform schooling have been underway ever since (see, for example, David, 1989; Elmore, 1988; Murphy & Evertson, 1990). Initial attempts focused on empowering teachers. More recent efforts have centered on school-based management and parental choice.

Surprisingly, however, few reformers have tried to draw the connections between these three strategies and classroom activities, processes and effects. Thus, as the Council of Chief State School Officers (1989) recently concluded, these three approaches to restructuring are increasingly being treated as ends in themselves rather than as means to improved learning for students. Equally disconcerting has been the virtual absence of attention to restructuring the teaching-learning process itself -- to teaching for understanding -- as a fourth avenue of fundamental reform. As the National Governors' Association (1989, p.1) reported: "Few reform reports have touched on the heart of the educational process, what is taught and how it is taught." Finally, we are puzzled by the lack of teacher voices in the discussion about restructuring. We find many reformers speaking for teachers, but few cases of teachers describing their own visions about what schools of the future should look like (see Carnegie Foundation, 1988, for an exception).

Although we can explain the pattern inherent in these phenomena, the decoupling of the technology of schooling from its supporting structure and subsequent focus on structure (see Meyer & Rowan, 1975), we still find the lack of attention to teaching and learning in the school restructuring movement troubling. We continue to believe that, since teaching and learning form the heart of all schooling operations, that our understanding of educational processes in restructured schools should be at least as well developed as is our understanding of school-based management, teacher empowerment, and choice.

In addition, through our study of restructured schools, we have arrived at a very disturbing conclusion: the connections between other components of change -- discretion enjoyed at the school level, authority wielded by teachers, and options available to parents -- and improved educational processes are tenuous at best (see also Hawley, 1988; Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1989; Rothman, 1990, 7 March). Therefore, we maintain that revisions in organizational and governance structures should backward map (Elmore, 1979-80) from the student. That is, fundamental discussions about how to restructure educational processes for more effective learning should precede the restructuring of other aspects of schooling.

We, therefore, undertook a study consisting of in-depth interviews with fourteen teachers, from the kindergarten through high school levels, to determine what they thought of the idea of restructuring, and to see, if given the power to implement change in schools, what they would improve about their schools, their teaching, and the students' learning.

Using a definition of restructuring that included site-based management and equal participation in decision-making between principals, teachers, and parents, with some student input as well, we asked the teachers to speculate, to dream, to draw up a wish list, to paint a picture of the ideal school environment, to imagine changes on both the school and classroom levels, and to discuss with us how such changes might be implemented.

This paper is part of a larger study investigating the effects of restructuring on teaching and learning. Our goal is to identify those aspects of classroom life that restructuring actually touches, to see if fundamental school reform leads to radical changes that deeply affect teachers and students or if changes will stop at the classroom door, leaving the teaching-learning process largely unaltered. We are also investigating the various ways of knowing what drives the changes implemented in schools, and how they are linked to classrooms undergoing restructuring. The six ways of knowing about restructuring teaching and learning that we have identified are: 1) national reform reports and studies from educational groups, especially those involving curricular reform; 2) analogues developed from other aspects of restructuring (e.g. teacher empowerment, parental choice); 3) information and reports from pioneering restructured districts; 4) the teacher and school effects literature; 5) research from cognitive science on the learning process; and 6) teacher perception and principal perception interviews (see Evertson, Murphy & Radnofsky, 1990; Murphy 1990b, and Murphy & Evertson, 1990).

Procedures

Sample

Fourteen teachers -- 13 women and one man -- from both private and public schools in the greater Nashville area, participated in the study. Six were elementary school teachers, two taught at the junior high or middle school level, and six others taught secondary school. Participants ranged in age from 26 to 50, and in teaching experience from 3 to 20 years. Twelve of the teachers had masters degrees. Since our goal was to paint a picture of what the "average" teacher thinks about school restructuring, we selected "normal" teachers -- participants who were neither super teachers nor who were experiencing serious difficulties.

Instrument

A scheduled interview protocol was developed for use in this study (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). The instrument, which consisted of 21 open-ended questions, was constructed from our own studies and from literature reviews of the six ways of understanding restructuring at the classroom level, noted earlier.

The teachers addressed open-ended, non-cued questions first, regarding: 1) their general feelings about restructuring, 2) whom they thought might be affected, and what changes would have to take place, both 3) globally and 4) within the school. We then moved to more specific areas of change and asked the teachers perceptions about twelve school-level areas, 4a) budget, 4b) curriculum, 4d) professional development, 4e) schedules, 4f) their expenditures of time, 4g) teaching practices, 4h) the organization of students for learning, 4i) management of student behavior, 4j) outcomes for students, 4k) students' interactions with students, and 4l) students' interactions with the teacher. Next, on the classroom level, we asked them to describe how restructuring the school might impact 5a) teaching-learning process, 5b) teacher's relationship with students, and 5c) culture/climate. Finally, we wanted the teachers to focus this impact at the classroom level on 6a) improving student learning, and 6b) establishing a learning orientation and encouraging student responsibility for learning. We asked questions that occasionally involved the same players (e.g., teachers and students), in different contexts. We were therefore able to gain information about the same actors from different perspectives.

The framework of the interview protocol was meant to guide the teachers to first think of restructuring in the most general terms -- to collect their thoughts on whom would be affected, what broad changes would occur, what general school changes and classroom changes they would expect -- then to focus on specific classroom changes and school-level changes. It ended with a request that they try to see themselves in a restructured school. We wanted to discover what they would do to improve student learning and to create a learning orientation in their classroom when given the power to change school-level policies.

Data Collection and Analyses

The interviews took place at the convenience of the participants, at their homes, in their schools, or at Vanderbilt University. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. Audio tape recordings were made of the interviews and these were transcribed and checked against the taped interviews. To facilitate analysis, the fourteen sets of transcriptions were color-coded.

Transcriptions were analyzed qualitatively following procedures outlined by Miles and Huberman (1984) and Goetz & LeCompte (1984). Coding and analytic induction were employed to develop the themes presented in the remainder of this report.

Results

1. General Idea of Restructuring

Eight of the teachers gave unhesitatingly positive and even enthusiastic responses when first asked about the general idea of restructuring. Two of them believed they already were involved in restructuring-type activities in their schools, and five others felt that the addition of teacher participation to decision-making processes would add significantly to improved functioning of the system.

In their early remarks, and despite their enthusiasm in most cases, many of the

teachers touched upon several problems which have generally been identified as being instrumental in blocking the improvement of student learning. They were skeptical of anyone or anything being able to dislodge power from administrators, and doubted being able to ever get parents truly involved. They complained that bureaucratic levels have become overwhelming, to the point of depersonalizing education, and even being instrumental in destroying it.

Opinions differed regarding the feasibility of changing such encrusted traditions in American education; two teachers seemed somewhat leery of change, while two others were convinced that extreme changes were the only chance for improvement. They saw the present system as being quite bad, and explained that it only still worked because of a few good teachers, though such exemplary teachers were usually not visible to the public, or even to their own colleagues. Teachers being isolated as they are would correspond to what Tracy Kidder refers to as "a ready-made system of damage control - watertight bulkheads as it were" (From Among Schoolchildren, 1989, p.52). While Kidder was referring to the ability to conceal incompetent and inadequately trained teachers, these same bulkheads would hide the inner workings of an effective classroom and a good teacher as well.

Summary

Eight teachers have shown distinct enthusiasm for restructuring, while several have also identified potential problems, suggesting limitations of feasibility, and mentioning the difficulty in changing a system where so many of the key players work in isolation from one another.

2. Whom/What Restructuring Will Affect

While the teachers seemed genuinely concerned for the students' welfare, and interspersed their comments with asides such as "...but I really think the students need to be the bottom line" in response to this question, only six of the teachers specifically mentioned the students. Student-related responses included the beliefs that: the dropout rate would lower, students would not be pulled out of the classroom for special education classes, students would be made more responsible and self-confident; they would take interest in their learning, and would become better thinkers.

On the other hand, and without exception, all fourteen interviewees believed that teachers would be affected in one way or another. Most of them anticipated positive changes, but those few that were skeptical identified possible increases in pressure, mistrust, and, paperwork.

Optimistic and idealistic teachers envisioned shared leadership, a greater sense of responsibility, and lead teachers as being part of a restructured system. In order to achieve those goals, however, both teachers and administrators would require training, several said, in order that the former may learn how to lead, and the latter may learn how to be "not as domineering." (Note: in the course of later questions, all fourteen teachers confirmed the need for further teacher pedagogical and/or administrative training.) Two teachers were on opposite sides of the issue of administrators' involvement in designing the curriculum, however, with one wanting them out of the

process entirely, and the other quite vehement about including them.

Parental involvement, too, would be needed, according to five teachers in the study. And parents would need to be taught about their new responsibilities to the school, "about what is involved in the educational process." One teacher felt it noteworthy that the custodial staff would improve their performance if included in the restructuring process in their schools, while two other teachers saw fit to eliminate this job altogether when discussing budget and staffing, believing that students and teachers should clean up after themselves.

Other topics brought up by the teachers on an individual basis included the establishment of a system of checks-and-balances within the school, year-round schooling, creation of a sense of belonging to the community, and less wasteful spending if teachers are involved in purchasing.

Summary

The teachers unanimously recognized the restructuring process as affecting teachers, especially in training them, but in giving them more responsibility and more influence in their own ranks, as well. Only six teachers of the fourteen saw students as being touched by the changes, however, perhaps in recognition that the changes they had in mind would be more for the comfort of the teachers than for the improvement of the students' education. Five teachers saw parents being affected, in that they would have more involvement; three others saw the custodial staff as part of the overall picture, and two discussed the changing role of administrators in school, one advocating their involvement in curriculum, the other preferring to abolish it.

Other considerations involved budgetary decisions, bureaucratic structure, schedules, and school climate.

3. Broad Changes

In the context of the third, general, non-cued question, the teachers' responses were consistent with the pattern of the second, that is, most of them did not see changes that would affect the students. In fact, only four teachers initiated student-related responses to this question: one who volunteered comment on the importance of student input, two who noted important changes in both emotional and cognitive aspects, one of whom was also the only one to initiate the idea that changes would have to be made in the teaching/learning process, and one who called for changes in standardized testing and school-provided food.

Consistent also with earlier responses, a majority (10) of the interviewees believed that broad changes would occur for teachers, with respect to their work redesign, new roles, and increased responsibilities. Eight teachers believed that training in both teaching techniques and administrative skills were also needed, seemingly because they recognized their lack of experience in areas such as administration, budget, hiring, participatory decision-making, etc. One mentioned the local substitute problem (where teachers would cover for each other since substitutes could not be afforded), and another targeting changes at the affective level, emphasizing the concept of working

together as a team.

Curriculum was also mentioned, usually in very broad terms, as being affected by restructuring, but by only half the teachers in the beginning; when later prompted to speak about it specifically, all the teachers came up with school-wide, general, and/or classroom-level, content-related suggestions. At this point, though, one teacher had already formed ideas about the need for courses on human sexuality, drugs, or health, and another advocated art/music and other classes emphasizing the creative aspect of learning.

Administrators were discussed by five teachers, one of whom noted their roles as liaison between parents and teachers, two who mentioned their need for training, one claiming, "The building principal ought to be given a whole lot more power to fire the teachers that aren't performing," and one wanting them to maintain their administrative duties and leave teachers alone, "I'm not really sure what the administrators do for me other than sort my mail,... make sure I have students in my classroom; and other than that, interrupt my class a great deal."

To more than half the teachers, improved communication and collaboration would be needed within the teaching staff, between teachers and administrators, across the boundaries between teachers and parents, and linking the school and the community. Commitment to these new partnerships was seen as being essential, as was "having trust in the system... a belief that it can be done." Toward this end, the interviewees mentioned the need for educating parents and the community, for ousting local political leaders, and for implementing numerous structural changes at the school level. One teacher also mentioned the importance of businesses cooperating with the schools, since they would be highly interested in having educated workers. Community commitment would therefore be imperative.

Summary

Only four teachers mentioned students under the topic of broad changes, and these were the same four of the six who also discussed students as being affected by restructuring in the last question, discussing both emotional and academic changes for them. In addition, ten of the teachers re-discussed influence and changes for teachers, whose work would be redesigned, whose roles and responsibilities would be different, and who would require new training to handle it all. The role administrators would play was discussed by five teachers, each with a different perspective.

Half the teachers mentioned curriculum as being affected, mostly in broad terms, but with two teachers identifying important additions to national curricula, including drug and health-related courses, and creative and whole language instruction.

Other broad changes discussed included the wish to improve communication, establish a commitment on the part of the community as well as the school, educate parents, remove local politicians, and involve business in the restructuring process.

4. School-Level Changes

Some of these structural changes were expressed more explicitly when the teachers were asked about general school-wide differences under restructuring. Unguided in these first responses, the teachers gave diverse suggestions, but none unanimous, indicating both the wide range of possibilities in a restructured school, as well as perhaps the creativity and range of the interviewees' imaginations.

Nevertheless, one theme echoed by nearly all of the teachers, in the context of one question or another, was that of time. Often this came in the form of a call for changes which would allow them more, uninterrupted instructional time, time to meet with parents, time to prepare better, time to move at their own pace, time to relax with students, time to collaborate with other teachers, time to observe each other teach, time to attend workshops, time to take the students out of the classroom, and time to meet with students individually. The need for more time in several of these instances was based on the number of students the teachers deal with on a daily basis, in some cases up to 150 individuals. Ten of the fourteen teachers therefore called for a reduced class size in the context of curriculum, schedules, climate, teachers' relationships with students, and ways of improving student learning and responsibility.

Three of the teachers specifically mentioned the frustrations they experienced because of interruptions from the public address system; two admitted to having rigged the speaker so it could be switched on and off when the teachers so chose. One teacher summed up the sentiment thus: "I don't think there should be anything that is priority over what I'm doing."

Problems of scheduling were also addressed in this section, with some of the teachers advocating the elimination of long summer breaks, at this point. Others brought up the subject of student absences when they are out on field trips with other teachers during regularly-scheduled classes; the interviewee mentioning this problem suggested an activity day so that out-of-classroom experiences could take place, but without interfering with regular instruction in other domains.

Many of the teachers reiterated the need for increased cooperation between all the groups involved, some strongly supporting the notion of student input. In addition, team-teaching, unit approaches, whole language activities, interdisciplinary studies, and cross-discipline reinforcement of lessons would be the norm instead of the exception. And one teacher wanted to somehow get the community's perception of how the school was doing. Three other teachers brought up the related issue of how the school community felt about itself, and discussed the importance of building a healthy self-esteem.

School-wide curriculum ideas were offered, and teachers explained how their contribution to this, as that of students, would consequently affect the ways students were organized for learning, schedules, parental involvement, special activities, teamwork amongst teachers, and evaluation procedures.

Five teachers spoke on the subject of their new, empowered roles, imagining an ideal situation wherein they were, at long last, listened to, and heard. Teacher

empowerment would give them choice, even to accept less than ideal situations in exchange for other necessities.

A redefinition of roles might take place, with professional development available as two teachers mentioned here, or required, as one teacher proposed, especially in the managerial domain, both for teachers as well as administrators.

Despite the myriad of hopeful suggestions most of the teachers offered, trepidations continued to be expressed throughout the interview, with two, sometimes three teachers consistently concerned with topics such as whether or not the practice of shared authority would work, or that there would be friction between unsure teachers "that would never feel that they were accepted as part of the whole" and "a lot of young principals that are coming out with new ideas...that come on a little too fast."

In fact, one teacher suspected that "parents have lost a lot of interest in the schools and... we may find that they are not interested in being interested... We could have the party and have no one come!"

Summary

The restructuring "party" is nevertheless being held, and transformations have begun to occur within the schools themselves. From what the teachers in this study have said, we might expect to see a number of structural changes in facilities, materials, schedules, organization, etc., but we might also see changes in school-community interactions, parental involvement in their children's education, student participation and engagement in learning, increased learning and better relationships resulting from smaller teacher-student ratios, and heterogenous student groupings, changes which would touch the students' lives more closely than those in the former category.

We next turn to the questions of specific school-level changes in order to determine what the changes would involve, and whom they would affect. According to indications from this study, it is teachers who will be most affected, even though these interviewees seemed genuinely concerned with their students.

4a. Budget

Of the fourteen teachers interviewed, seven felt it necessary to reiterate the need for teacher participation in the budget, even though this fact was a given in the question asked of them here: "In a school where teachers and principals together make decisions, and in which they have considerable authority... what changes would you envision in...the school budget?"

Two teachers were quite pessimistic and doubted very much teachers would be given what they wanted out of the budget. Another initially thought that he would have to raise the money to have power over it, and was, incidentally, the only teacher to consider the fact that he would not have time to handle budgetary matters if he were still a classroom teacher (if he had to raise the funds).

A logical priority for more than half (8) of the teachers interviewed was in the

form of purchasing various materials needed directly for teaching (e.g. video camera, computers, tape, scissors, math manipulatives). Related to the question of materials is that of space. Three teachers emphasized the importance for more and different work and learning spaces in a restructured school, including a sound-proof space "that you could destroy constantly and rehearse in and be as crazy as you wanted to," offices for the teachers, different-sized classrooms, and more smoke-free areas.

The second most common wish teachers had in the utilization of the budget concerned the hiring of more people to occupy both previously nonexistent positions as well as presently existing ones. Six different interviewees discussed the need for teacher aides, departmental secretaries, custodial staff, supervisory staff, a school nurse, and community members. The teachers spoke of the need for secretaries in each department at several different junctures in the interview, bringing up the subject under the topics of budget, the way teachers spend their time, and ways of improving student learning.

Four teachers targeted direct academic concerns for more funding, some centering on specific programs such as community chemistry or enrichment courses, others on curriculum, using meaningful, interdisciplinary approaches, and some on testing and evaluation, such as through the use of a learning styles test. The common denominator, though, was learning-related needs that would directly touch the child.

Surprisingly, only one teacher suggested higher teacher pay, indicating that perhaps, at least for these teachers, there is more focus given to the needs of the entire school and to the students. Perhaps not so surprisingly, though, only one teacher believed that students should in some way control the money, and proposed they do so in an interesting manner:

"I would have a system of bonuses for personnel... Let the faculty and students elect the student who would be on the evaluation committee, and then I would give them a set amount of money and decide how they wanted to distribute it among the teachers."

Summary

Generally, then, the teachers would spend their budgets on materials, space, staffing, special programs, and higher teacher pay, in descending order of popularity. In light of the association many of the teachers made between money and time, it would seem that both were needed in order to allow teachers more time to work closely with the students in an effort to improve their learning.

4b. Curriculum

A distinct trend toward the desire for an integrated, interdisciplinary curriculum across time as well as subject matter is evidenced in eight of the teachers' responses. With all that there is to learn in today's world, they affirmed, the idea was to teach the whole child, to rid education of the notion of incongruity, and to replace it with a sense of continuity and interrelatedness.

An important factor in implementing any of these changes, however, would be the role of each of the participants in curriculum design. As for state and other local administrators, three teachers specified that they wanted the state out of the loop entirely; two others envisioned district and school-level administrators as part of the process, but only with equal or minor participation relative to that of teachers. Several of the teachers indicated that teacher participation was crucial in curriculum development, while only a few advocated student input, and only one addressed the question of parental involvement at all in curriculum.

The teachers came up with a wide variety of suggestions for changes in curriculum, depending on their grade and subject areas, but which they saw as involving everyone in school. One subject they breached was that of self-esteem, which they saw as an important aspect of both their students' and their own satisfaction and success in the school setting.

Some of the teachers' specific additions to school curricula, which would not seem particularly difficult to implement, could conceivably cause much controversy if parents and/or community were not included in the decision to offer such courses. Their suggestions included: sustained, silent reading; an extended AIDS curriculum; a drugs/human sexuality/behavior course [junior high and high school]; home economics [elementary school]; a spiraled Math curriculum; a foreign language [elementary school]; requiring combinations of courses such as European history and European literature; computer labs; and providing science courses such as chemistry for both specialists and non-specialists.

Summary

The restructured curriculum would generally involve interdisciplinary teaching methods and activities, as the majority of the teachers state, and would be applicable to real life situations, making the learning process meaningful.

4c. Climate

The most widespread belief/hope concerning the climate in a restructured school was that it would foster a sense of belonging and unity. Responsibility for one's peers, cooperation and the resulting continuity were accompanying themes developed by several of the teachers. This sense of unity might also make students proud to be a part of their school, one teacher proposed, and that they would all see "that every teacher has an investment in the school and in the kids. It would be connected: not just 55 minutes here and 55 minutes there."

The focus on students in this question came from numerous teachers who believed that goals would be more student-oriented, that there would be more student participation, that learning would be fun, and that students would believe in the system, their own abilities, and themselves. It would be the type of atmosphere described by three teachers as being relaxed, affecting the students in the one case, but also the teachers, who would no longer feel overwhelmed by the frenetic pace, vast quantity of subject matter to teach, and sheer number of students for whom they were responsible.

A couple of teachers suggested that the atmosphere would seem much more vibrant, since power can be a thrilling thing to possess, and school life would be "incredibly more exciting, because everyone from the top down would feel more empowered." Perhaps the key here is "feel" more empowered; it would seem then, that the teachers must be made to feel part of this powerful community, and that they must be given the chance to exercise some of that power.

Other generally optimistic hopes and predictions which would establish a better environment after restructuring were that it be open, uninhibited, friendly, and that fewer discipline problems occur. Concurrently, there would ideally be no more racial tensions, with no minorities feeling as though they were being unfairly treated.

And yet, three of the teachers were somewhat pessimistic, and they suspected negative results from restructuring attempts; they were concerned about the inability to get all teachers involved, and that if one actually could, the teachers would be unable to come to an agreement, and would always "need a moderator or a principal that would have the final say."

Summary

According to the vast majority of the teachers, the school climate would take on a more relaxed feeling on the one hand, but a more energetic one on the other; it would be more open, uninhibited, friendly, and fair. Students would have a sense of belonging and responsibility; they would be more self-assured, more optimistic, and school would be a fun place to be.

4d. Professional Development

Three different views can be identified within this category: teachers believing in incentives to further their knowledge, teachers wanting to set their own goals, and teachers wanting professional development required of everyone.

The five who believed it was important for them to have some kind of incentive to further their knowledge of teaching suggested it come in the form of financial rewards, but it was also proposed that promotion, increased release time, and different types of advancement would be as equally motivational.

Three other teachers, while advocating professional development, thought that just the promise of new, useful knowledge should motivate teachers enough; one of them was particularly critical of incentives such as the state's career ladder program: "I don't think that we should learn how to salivate when the bell rings...I think we should set up our own hoops to jump through."

In a completely opposite view, however, one teacher believed professional development should be a requirement, for the teachers' own good, based on the notion that "if you force teachers to participate in so many different things, you are going to get motivated to do more," though not everyone would agree.

While incentives and/or requirements seemed important to the teachers, there

was little mention of anyone's financial responsibility for furthering their education; only two teachers discussed this, one of whom mentioned the teachers being paid to attend the workshop, but neglected to specify who would pay for the workshop itself; the other teacher called for the local community to support teachers' professional development in a unique remark not only advocating community concern, but community financial responsibility as well.

In the area of human relations and cooperation, many of the teachers spoke of the need for more useful and pertinent workshops, some in counseling, administrative matters, communicating with parents, assertive discipline, and one who saw the need for "global education conferences. The bigots would have to go to some sort of tolerance training."

Only three teachers spoke of the need to further their studies in specific content areas, perhaps because they felt sufficiently confident already, or maybe because they regularly improving their knowledge on their own.

Summary

While all of the teachers recognized the need for training in pedagogical methods or leadership and administrative skills, merely three believed that their knowledge of the subject matter they taught needed any updating. This may point to signs of complacency, potentially leaving teachers stagnant, or it may indicate a sufficient availability of possibilities already in existence for teachers to remain current in their fields.

4e. Schedules

Central to the discussion of time and schedule is the issue of flexibility for most of the teachers. Eight of them wanted to see efforts made to allow them the freedom (and therefore the time) they needed to complete an activity they had organized, whether it be a scientific experiment or the reading of a Greek myth. This would involve cooperation and coordination, not always easy to achieve, but it was still the most common battle cry, not just in the high schools where the 55-minute class periods were harshly criticized, but in the elementary and middle schools as well, where the solution of a self-contained classroom was seen as the most preferable solution.

The underlying theme in nearly all the responses was a wish for all the external interferences that occur in the schools to stop encroaching upon the teachers' instructional time.

One interesting point was a call for the elimination of bells to change classes, and of the Public Address system to make announcements. High school teachers, especially, suggested that teachers simply use the clock to know when to release the students, and complained of the unnecessary interruptions in their instructional time. Details such as these contribute to choppiness of the day, and therefore to the difficulty in establishing any sort of continuity and interrelatedness of subjects, at the elementary or secondary level.

Five of the teachers believed that a year-round system with different and/or more

frequent breaks would be much better than the present one with a long summer. The most important consideration here seemed to be having the students for the most academic time as possible, even though physically having the students in school would not guarantee their learning; at least it was half the battle.

One of the related topics to school year length was brought up by two of the teachers who held diametrically opposed views regarding reasons for the time of year that school would start:

"I really wish that we could go back to starting in September; I think August is a little warm for them in the South."

"Stop placating our old system in the South that it is hot in the summertime and we have children out there doing cheap labor... We have air conditioning!"

Teachers who taught in a school that begins at 6:55 a.m. also had complaints about such an early start, pointing out that high school kids will stay up late whether they have school the next day or not, and that for those students who work, there is even more difficulty in being alert at that hour of the morning.

Working into the schedule some extra planning time, counseling time in advisor/advisee style, planned field trips, and flex time with no scheduled activity were some of the miscellaneous suggestions made by teachers and revisited in the question regarding how teachers spend their time.

Summary

The question of schedules is inevitably linked to time, and therefore to interruptions of it. Many of the teachers stressed this point, noting the problem with P.A. systems, and bells. Several supported the notion of more time to teach on a daily and a yearly basis. They argued for flexibility in schedules so that lessons lasting more than 55 minutes could be completed in one sitting. On a wider level, the suggestion of year-round school with brief vacations was also made, but there was no consensus of views, with one teacher wanting longer summer vacations, another proposing a trimester system, and some just wanting things to stay the same as they are.

4f. Way Teachers Spend Their Time

While most teachers agreed that they needed more time during the day to take care of everything expected of them, four saw the problem differently, suggesting that simply less be expected of them in certain areas, namely regarding bureaucratic details and duty time. And to fill the time which would be freed up from the lifting of these burdensome duties, many of the teachers proposed a full agenda of student-centered planning, teaching, and grading responsibilities they seemed eager to undertake, as illustrated by one teacher, who said: "Give me more teaching duties; I'd love it!"

Furthermore, three teachers saw more effective use of their time if coordinated with colleagues regarding the students' welfare, or if they met directly with individual

students in an advisory role. One teacher proposed special programs involving the community and providing opportunities to bring students together in working groups.

Five interviewees mentioned the developmental and personal aspects of being a teacher as requiring their time, but that made up merely a small part their day, and were nevertheless all too often compromised. They would therefore make sure in a restructured school that time were scheduled for such items as business phone calls for the school newspaper sponsor, writing mini-grant proposals, personal hygiene, and, as one of them stated, individual research.

Summary

Over half the teachers clearly were interested in putting more of their energy and knowledge into academic activities with or for the benefit of the students. They saw duty and recordkeeping as drudgery, and a waste of their skills and time, but were not seeking to be less busy, just less occupied with burdensome bureaucratic or guard-type responsibilities. In this way, they would be more free to deal with student needs. Several teachers' remarked on their need for breaks to handle personal matters.

4g. Way Teachers Teach

Critical of the present teaching style traditionally found in U.S. classrooms, several teachers expressed the desire for less lecture, worksheets, and other non-interactive teaching behaviors; one teacher's anecdote about a colleague trying out for the state's career ladder program revealed her pessimism about the quality of current instruction, and the necessity of giving teachers feedback on their teaching techniques.

And yet most of the teachers wanted the freedom to teach what they thought would be best for their students. This idea of more freedom to teach the way they wanted opened up the possibility to some for incorporating other subjects and creating a true interdisciplinary educational environment, one in which students would be taught critical thinking skills and be involved in hands-on, meaningful activities. This would transfer to other areas as well; "Teachers would begin trying to have what is going on in their classroom feed or enhance what is going on somewhere else, and would be looking for things in other classrooms."

However, critical thinking activities as well as many other activities suggested in this section would take a considerable amount of time, and this became a very real consideration for the teachers. They brought up the issues of class size, special students, individual and small group work, and some remarked that both increased time and money would be necessary for their suggestions to work.

But money and time problems aside, one teacher, vigilant about the possibility of being "restructured" into an unmotivated worker, and having her students be "restructured" out of school, warned, "There is too much freedom... I think we all need structure, organization, and guidance, and if you don't have it, I can envision a whole haphazard [situation]." This teacher appeared to interpret our term, restructured, as meaning unstructured.

Summary

Freedom and flexibility were the major themes of teachers' comments in this section, with the idea that interdisciplinary and integrated curricula could be developed, and reinforcement could occur across subject areas. Several teachers specifically noted the inclusion of more higher-level thinking activities as well. One teacher remained skeptical of restructuring, defining it in her own way, where she saw too much freedom being detrimental to the students.

4h. Way Students Organized For Learning

Indeed this same teacher, in the context of the question regarding ways of organizing students, was equally pessimistic in what she came to define as the "unstructured open-space" situation where students were, she said, uncooperative, ill-mannered, and had difficulty interacting.

On the other hand, most of the teachers described elaborate grouping schemes, and discussed their philosophy supporting them. Seven of the teachers could not decide upon one philosophy of grouping, and therefore discussed combinations. Of those who advocated heterogenous groupings, one supported ONLY heterogenous grouping. Two other teachers came out predominantly in favor of homogenous ability grouping, and one for no grouping at all.

The concept of teacher-imposed versus student-selected grouping was also addressed, with the homogenous ability grouping being teacher-imposed, but with both teacher- and student-choice possible with heterogenous groups. Several of the teachers recognized the fact that the students can learn from each other quite well and even allowed them to "float" from one group to another if they were not content.

As for grade level distinctions, the two teachers supporting homogenous grouping only, also preferred maintaining high school grade separations, for the most part, explaining that there were some subjects and levels of discussion that could not be effectively communicated with younger students, and they therefore chose to keep age and ability in homogenous groups as much as possible.

On the elementary level, one teacher explained why she preferred no group at all within her class for reading instruction, but she also stated that most of her students were at about the same level, so she in fact already had a homogenous group to deal with. Earlier, she claimed she liked different groupings, as the students could learn from one another, but did not elaborate on what these might be.

On the issue of individualized instruction, two teachers supported the idea, but one revealed her own insecurity at the prospect of having to implement it with every student, and the other echoed the problem of not having the time to even try.

Finally, one teacher, either pessimistically or complacently imagined no differences in the ways students would be grouped for learning, as "there is such variety of that right now."

Summary

Eclecticism would best characterize the styles half the teachers described in explaining their theories on grouping students for learning, believing there was a time for heterogenous and a time for homogenous arrangements. Two of these strongly advocated individual instruction when possible. Only one teacher supported heterogenous grouping alone, while two supported only homogenous organization of students. One teacher was vague on the subject, another saw no change in the status quo, and the last voiced suspicions of restructuring in general.

4i. Management of Student Behavior

The question regarding the management of student behavior left most teachers searching for more and different things they could do, such as: providing positive reinforcement, using rewards and punishment, offering incentives, seeking training in discipline techniques, improving their teaching, improving their attitudes, sharing trade secrets with each other; the list goes on. In fact, there were more different suggestions made in response to this question than to any other thus far.

One teacher proposed the notion...that students be made responsible for managing their own behavior. This teacher was also among only three others that spoke of students being responsible for each other's actions. For the most part, the teachers saw student behavior as a domain to be controlled by teachers.

Furthermore, only three teachers out of the fourteen identified the importance of student participation in the establishment of rules, thereby leaving over half the teachers in this study excluding the students entirely from the planning and/or implementation of any behavior management program.

It is also worthwhile to note, that of the teachers who advocated the various ideas of student control, most also suggested numerous other teacher-centered interventions and parent participation, the exception being one teacher who believed in the concept of students controlling themselves. A more commonly held view was students being responsible for each other, or "policing their own ranks" as one teacher put it.

Training was an issue that a few teachers suggested in order to educate the community, parents, administrators, as well as teachers in the policies and practices of managing student behavior, but it was recognized that such training would only be possible if all concerned were totally committed to the child and to the benefits it would bring to the school and local community.

Positive reinforcement, assertive discipline, and rewards as opposed to punishments were among some of the tools suggested by the teachers for managing student behavior. Corporal punishment was also seen as sometimes being the only alternative, according to one teacher, but ruled out as being perfectly useless, by another.

The issue of "staffing out" students was raised; this was the shuffling around of problem students in the school district, a policy which one teacher reportedly abhorred,

believing that once the student had been given three chances, then the student should be removed, not just transferred. Another teacher saw students being removed as well, but added that they should also be given help with the problem (e.g. drugs, alcohol), "so that there would be some positive outcome... Fewer people fall through the cracks."

Whatever the teacher-controlled solution, be it the Golden Rule or a long list of infractions and punishments, most teachers did agree on one point - that the rules or program be uniform throughout the school, and that they/it be consistently enforced.

Such measures were seen as leading to more learning and more cooperation by some. One teacher's comment was that "If the discipline could be dealt with, and I would be involved with that, the curriculum would come right along, the educational process would come right along, and I would feel better about it."

However, one teacher believed the opposite, that better teaching would lead to fewer problems, and therefore better disciplined students: "Improving teaching would help classroom management." The ideas being that if there is poor classroom management, there can be little teaching.

One teacher saw discipline as remaining in the domain of the principal, teacher, and parent, and not changing significantly.

Summary

Diversity characterized the responses to this question, with most teachers focusing on a single management style for dealing with student behavior. However, only three teachers supported student input to this process, with merely one believing that students alone should be responsible for their own behavior. All the other teachers considered this a mostly teacher-centered area of control, sometimes including parents and administrators, and they offered solutions such as positive reinforcement, assertive discipline, and "consequence" systems as opposed to punishment systems, noting that any of these would have to be consistently enforced in the whole school.

One teacher believed that better discipline would lead to better learning, and one believed that better teaching would lead to better discipline; in both cases, teachers were seen as crucial players in the process.

4j. Outcomes For Students

Many of the teachers saw both social and academic benefits resulting from the restructuring process, some focusing more on the one than the other. The ten that saw academic outcomes improving for students in restructured schools expressed general optimism, some focusing on minimum literacy, couching their answers in mostly vague terms, and others describing more elaborately advanced skills such as thinking, creativity, inquisitiveness, and independence of thought. "They have to be able to read and write...literacy." "Achievement will be greater." "The system, as it stands, encourages and rewards students for conforming, for not questioning, and for allowing themselves to become powerless... Ideally, restructured schools would encourage them to feel powerful and independent, and to ask questions and understand what they're doing, without

having to be disruptive about it."

The issue of tests was discussed by two teachers with completely opposing viewpoints, one seeing scores increase, the other decrease because of changes in goals: "Some students are not test-takers, but restructuring, I feel, will even work on that... Teacher-made tests as well as standardized tests, achievement tests... would improve." "Another outcome might be that they don't do well on ACT's or SAT's. I would love to stop teaching tests, unless tests test things that kids are supposed to really learn, and that's how to think."

Others teachers added that the restructured environment would encourage challenge as well, and an appreciation and even excitement for one's education, which would manifest itself not only within the school environment, but beyond it both during and after formal schooling in the form of lifelong skills. And with this budding enthusiasm, teachers hoped that students would learn to take responsibility for themselves as individuals and as learners, and to develop a sense of responsibility for their peers, their environment, and their futures, as they become integral, successful members of society.

Half the teachers saw a sense of happiness and control over one's own destiny as accompanying many of these other social benefits, along with pride in one's work as well as in oneself. Improved self-esteem was another fringe benefit, as was a less "stressed-out" feeling. One teacher even speculated about outcomes for parents, due to the increase in students' increased responsibility for their own learning.

On the other hand, as one otherwise optimistic teacher speculated, there may be some dark sides to this seemingly rosy picture of restructuring, with kids frustrated and confused as they became caught between "a thinking, liberal [school] system versus a controlling system of the family [which] is saying, 'don't think.'" The possible negative aspects of restructuring were also recognized by another teacher, who worried about the loner child, "the shy one being lost in the shuffle."

Finally, there are the two teachers who gave what might be termed non-answers. In the first instance, in response to a question about what student outcomes might be, one interviewee believed that teachers who "felt like they had a little bit more control over what was going on on a daily basis, could exert that to the benefit of the student."

In the second case, the teacher who had believed in the Golden Rule for discipline, now cited a presidential campaign slogan to describe her efforts "okay, whatever the situation... to go toward, well, what is it Bush says, 'a kinder and gentler [nation].'"

Summary

At this point, forced to focus on the students themselves, most of the teachers reported a combination of social and academic benefits to be derived from the restructured environment. There was a distinct note of optimism in most of the teachers' comments as they elaborated on academic themes, seeing students as being

more "alive and aware and skilled enough within a classroom to know what a good learning situation is, to want it, and to demand it." On a social level, one teacher summed it up thus: "These are the people who are going to learn to be cooperative ...entrepreneurs, self-starters... good citizens."

Nevertheless concern for the potentially harmful effects was voiced by two teachers, one balancing the negative with the positive, the other only seeing the bad. In addition, two other teachers failed to directly address the issue, centering on issues of teacher power, parental involvement, and budgets.

4k. Students' Interaction With Students

All seven of the high school teachers explained that in a restructured school, students would need to develop awareness and respect for each other's differences. Four described how this would alleviate tensions and reduce problems such as bigotry within their school community. Students would learn to work better together, develop a feeling of cohesiveness or bonding, resulting from either the growth of mutual respect and awareness, and/or from experience of working together toward a common goal. Sometimes that common goal would mean one student learning content from another, sharing knowledge; other times it could mean peers in a counseling group helping each another. One fringe benefit also mentioned was an increase in school spirit. And another, perhaps more significant benefit, as discussed by a high school teacher was "Mutual respect...multiple perspectives... They would become more aware of global issues and how the United States relates to the rest of the world."

However, one teacher took an authoritarian stance on directing student relations: "I don't allow my children in my room to say anything negative about anybody else."

And one other teacher saw virtually no changes occurring in student interactions at all, while a third envisioned an unstructured environment ill-suited to meet the needs of the child, as she saw her students: "pairing up and excluding other students, feeling superior because they made friends with a particular person."

Summary

A total of twelve teachers speculated on improved interpersonal relations between students, ranging from the ideal eradication of racism to the simple act of sharing knowledge or helping each other in a counseling group. They felt students would feel a kind of bonding amongst themselves, see commonalities and differences as existing without indicating superiority or inferiority. One teacher remained persistent in her belief that the status quo would remain intact, and another teacher persisted in her pessimism that certain students would be isolated from others.

4l. Students' Interaction With Teachers

In response to the question regarding changes in students' interactions with teachers, two of those interviewed flatly stated that there would be none, since their current relationships were already strong. However, when asked to hypothesize about general changes between teachers and students, they were able to describe a new situation wherein students and teachers would feel as though they were co-learners.

Indeed, one of the most striking remarks that ten (seven in this context, and three in response to question 5b) of the teachers made, concerned how they hoped students would perceive them as being more 'human,' instead of as omniscient, omnipotent figures. They explained that this new interaction would take the form of a friendship, a partnership, a kind of bonding, and would, in most cases, show the students that the teachers truly cared. The students would have a 'safe' place to be, and would be unafraid to approach teachers with either academic or social questions.

The issue of time was inevitably addressed in this question, since such interactions would mean that teachers would have to be freed up from other duties, and/or be given fewer students for whom they would be responsible.

In general, most of the teachers believed that when students were given more control of their education, positive changes in student-teacher interactions regarding learning would occur. One teacher strongly believed that if teachers let their guard down and asked students what would be needed to improve learning, or what would the teachers need to do differently, then student-teacher relationships as well as the teaching/learning process would improve.

Not all the teachers interviewed saw students as having power in the ideal restructured school, despite the given situations for this study. Two in fact, dwelled upon the importance of the teacher being in control. One described a situation seeming to exclude any personal interaction between teacher and student, noting that teachers in control get "the kind of respect that they would like to have." The other teacher predicted much "spontaneous behavior and movement in the classroom" then forebode a bleak life for the student in such an "unstructured" school.

In much a different tone, another teacher thought that perhaps she interacted too much with students, and saw change as occurring in the type of interaction instead of the amount, moving away from the social, and towards a more academically-oriented relationship.

Summary

One of the most agreed-upon notions in this study is that of teachers hoping that students would perceive them as being more "human," as opposed to omniscient or omnipotent. The teachers wanted the students to feel they could approach them with any problem, yet understand that teachers didn't have the resources to solve or fix everything. Some felt that there needed to be more of a friendship than there was, and a more equal participation in educational decisions affecting them. Given the chance to choose, students would then feel more willing to take the initiative, and the responsibility for their own learning. Thus the benefits would be both academic and social, contributing to a better environment not only for the students and the teachers, but for the community as well.

5. Classroom-Level Changes

5a. Teaching-Learning Process

Given the restructured school of their own making, the surveyed teachers generally focused on the classroom changes that would be necessary to improve student learning. Some, however centered more on structural aspects which were less directly involved with instruction, but when prompted to make the tie-in with the teaching-learning process, they explained their responses, which ranged from basic survival necessities to hi-tech equipment.

Some of those structural changes suggested at this time included providing enough desks for all the students, a map in every room, manipulatives, interactive learning materials, one computer per student, and having a physically larger classroom. One elementary teacher wanted an area with big pillows to allow students to take tests in comfortable positions, recounting a story about one child: "The brightest boy in my room [took] his achievement test lying flat on his back."

However, in addition to the structural suggestions, one teacher maintained that there ought to be "more emphasis on creativity, whether it be writing, art, music, drama" and that "academic skills should be the primary focus." In this same vein, two other teachers placed importance on variety in instructional style, describing their own as already quite eclectic.

Half of the teachers expressed the desire for an interrelatedness, an interdisciplinary approach to the tasks of teaching and learning, accompanied by a time structure allowing them to implement it. This interrelatedness and integration of subjects would be facilitated by different projects which would encourage higher level thinking, especially synthesis, on the part of the students. The projects some of the teachers proposed would concern a new way of using field trips, involving parents and community in new ways, so that they would actually participate in the establishment of goals and help students work, instead of just providing rides or money. Adapting the school schedule to accommodate such variety in technique, approach, grouping, and curriculum would be essential, and the majority of teachers believed that built-in flexibility was essential.

One point reiterated at this juncture regarded the number of students in a classroom, and often related to that, the amount of time a teacher would have to spend with each child, in a regularly scheduled high school hour. Three of the ten teachers that advocated smaller class sizes explained this, one of them stating that "It's impossible to address individual problems when you have 30 to 35 individuals in a 50-minute time period."

However, when the teacher cannot provide individual attention, five of the teachers suggested peer-tutoring, group work, and other student-oriented procedures to compensate. They further saw the educational benefits of such activities where "children can relate to children sometimes, [and] speak on their level."

Summary

The predominant theme in this section revolves around the notion of flexibility as it affects teaching, whether it be in schedules, teaching styles, curriculum, evaluation, or

grouping of students. Interrelatedness of subject matter was strongly supported, especially when an integrated curriculum could be implemented. One of the fourteen teachers, however gave a non-answer to this question, not addressing in any way the teaching-learning process within the classroom, but rather discussing the principal's role, parents and curriculum, pressure to cover material, and other school-level matters.

5b. Teachers' Relationship With Students

This question involved the same participants as 4L, but the notion of "interaction" was replaced with that of "relationship," and three more of the teachers who had not mentioned how they had hoped to be perceived by the students as more 'human' then, did so here, pointing out that "getting to know the students more personally" was an important aspect of restructuring.

Perhaps most interesting of the three "converts" was one teacher who seemed mistrusting of the restructuring concept, and who had seen little benefit at the school level for many of the changes proposed. Her response here, however, revealed a caring, concerned, and in fact quite deeply involved side, as she described the warm, wholesome relationship with parents and students that she felt was important.

Another of the three who bears special notice is one of the elementary school teachers, for when asked what would change in her relationship with students, she answered that she couldn't see much changing at all, as it was already quite enjoyable. Two other teachers also mentioned that they saw little or nothing that would change, but in a much more pessimistic tone, begrudgingly adding that perhaps there might be general climate changes at the classroom level.

Three teachers, however, were quite specific in the changes they perceived would occur; they saw trust, a sense of family, cohesiveness, safety, and comfort, especially when none could be found outside the school walls. Five other teachers joined them in calling for the creation of this type of environment, with the suggestion of building in the time for teachers to do the one-on-one counseling, tutoring, planning, or problem-solving that was needed.

The students and the teachers would be more cooperative, and more mutually responsible for learning, said three teachers. But with eight of the teachers in agreement that the responsibility for academic progress ought to be shared, there was considerable room for opinion on just how much the teacher ought to do versus the how much the students should be held accountable for, in the academic context.

Two of the teachers put decidedly more emphasis on the teacher's role, describing things such as having to "show the students that you love your subject" and being the type of teacher who allots time to extracurricular activities to better get to know the students. The six other teachers mixed the ideas of encouraging the students to be independent, acting as their mentor, and refusing to give the students answers in order to force them to think for themselves despite the frustration this inevitably caused.

Summary

While no consensus has been established, we note that the majority of the teachers saw the existence of close relationships with their students as an important element in the success of a classroom, both as an academic as well as a social environment. There would be improved trust, safety, and comfort in the "family" of the classroom. More important, as eight teachers pointed out, academic responsibility would be shared between teacher and students, the latter of which would become increasingly independent with the passing of time.

5c.Culture/Climate

With the exception of one, all the teachers discussed some sort of positive change in the classroom climate, ten of them directly addressing the academic benefits which would consequently be reaped. Overlapping in several cases, twelve teachers saw important social/emotional changes in their classroom climate. Two believed that for their personal cases, no changes in classroom climate would be necessary, but were able to speculate about the ideal learning environment in both academic and social terms.

For the ten teachers who felt that restructuring would foster more learning, a "positive classroom climate" would be linked closely to its educational outcomes.

Control from external sources would serve the purpose of creating more racially integrated classes, allowing for equal learning opportunity, and flexibility would permit diversity of interests to be nurtured. Meaningfulness and, therefore, transfer of knowledge would be achieved, with a classroom full of self-motivated students who would understand the importance of the task at hand. Students would be responsible for each other's as well as for their own learning and would, in general, feel comfortable enough in their environment to discuss any well-thought-out ideas with their teachers, the persistent problem being not having the time to do so.

Most of the teachers who foresaw changes in the academic climate of the classroom also envisioned a new social classroom environment, one that would contribute to the mental health of the teachers and/or students, but which would not necessarily improve or increase learning, though this was not impossible. However, these social changes seemed to be quite important to the twelve teachers concerned.

Having time for individuals, for example, might not affect students' academic learning, but would probably make for happier students, and the idea of having comfort, warmth, safety, and fun while in school was also addressed, with the accompanying openness, honesty, consideration for others, and general relaxed feelings. Four teachers spoke specifically of responsibility as members of a group and self-confidence, both on the part of the students and the teacher, and described the overall environment as being 'freer' allowing for more interactions among students and between students and the teacher and administrators.

There were many differences in ways of going about achieving this environment; some teachers favored considerable teacher-control and others advocated parent involvement. However, in only a very few cases were students expected to control this aspect of classroom life.

Summary

A positive change in classroom environment would involve addressing academic considerations and nurturing social/emotional needs, according to all but one of the teachers, who discussed parental support of teachers in response to this question. The thirteen others advocated flexibility of schedules to encourage diversity, meaningfulness of curriculum to enhance transfer and a sense of purpose, and having enough time to give support to those students needing it. Racial balance would alleviate tensions, and students would help themselves as they began to take responsibility for their own learning and futures. There would be a general feeling of warmth, honesty, safety, and openness in these teachers' classrooms, with an increase in the number and quality of interactions among its members.

4-5 Summary

Questions in sections 4a-4l dealt with matters potentially occurring at the school-wide level. The manner in which many of the teachers approached each area of change was colored by their individual classroom situations to a greater or lesser degree. Nevertheless, each teacher's perception of what would be needed at the school level in an ideal, restructured environment began to shed light not only upon the subjects which we asked the teachers to address, but upon the similarities and differences between teachers' perceived individual school realities.

While about half of the teachers seemed to have great trouble focusing on or perhaps accepting the idea of student participation, several felt confident that such student input would contribute greatly to the positive climate of the school, that students teaching other students and participating in decision-making would benefit all in at least one of the following areas: social interaction, self-esteem, academic advancement, discipline.

There was unmistakable optimism in the majority of the teachers. However, the two or three who admitted to seeing little improvement in given areas are among those with the most years of experience (18-20 years) and are the three oldest teachers in the study (48,49,50 years old); perhaps having seen teaching fads come and go, or maybe a stoic resolve that things will never change on the school level, have been instrumental in making these teachers wary about the benefits of restructuring.

And yet, when asked questions about how restructuring would change life within the classroom setting, these teachers were considerably more optimistic and insightful. Perhaps this could be because of their perception of having more control about what goes on in their own domains as opposed to the administratively-run schools they are presently in.

In a final series of questions, we examine those changes which would have to take place in order to improve student learning and to have students take some of the responsibility upon themselves in the creation of a learning environment within the classroom.

6a. Improve Student Learning-Classroom Level

Based solely on this particular question, teachers, toward the end of the interview, were asked to speak specifically to the matter of improving student learning. This subject had already been mentioned (questions 5 a-c) earlier in the interview, but more emphasis was placed on the power teachers would have to "rearrange schedules, class grouping, and purchase needed materials." The teachers' widely varied answers echoed earlier themes upon which they had begun to elaborate.

Their responses may be classified into categories of: 1) student participatory changes, with student right of choice, responsibilities, organization for learning, teacher-student relationships and social/personal needs being considered; 2) classroom-level changes, involving the teaching-learning process, discipline, curriculum, content and evaluation; 3) structural/ budgetary changes, including facilities and materials, staffing, and scheduling; and 4) teacher responsibilities, with needs assessments, observations, student grade comparisons, training and research considered.

Eight of the teachers focused quite clearly on the students as being instrumental in improving their own learning, with four specifically giving the students much more responsibility, based on the consideration of their interests as well. To them there would be more cooperative learning and multilevel courses, peer tutoring, and better communication between students and teachers. Teachers would have smaller classes, be responsible for fewer students, and would, therefore, work more individually with them. One teacher mentioned that students would have to eat breakfast, and would be able to wear any decent clothes they wished. Several teachers supported the idea of students having a counseling group with whom they could share problems and help each other.

Classroom changes, which would be implemented more closely to the student than any other restructuring intervention, would involve meaningful activities, higher order thinking problems, and field trips. Students would not be suspended for tardiness and absenteeism. There would be a consensus regarding curriculum, and it would include a time designated for reading, study skills courses, AIDS education, and courses on human sexuality, behavior, and drugs. The teachers would teach interdisciplinary units, and evaluation would cover a wide range of possibilities.

The next widely discussed change to improve student learning involved the purchase of necessary facilities and materials, which six teachers brought up, usually for the second or third time during this interview (Note: This was one of the cues in the question, "you have complete freedom to...purchase needed materials...") One teacher explained the need for teacher offices; the subject of space indeed seemed important, as two other teachers described sound-proof theater labs and a big room to go do anything in. Other physical plant changes were brought up, including the updating of science labs, providing maps, computers, A/V equipment, T.V.'s, and manipulatives.

The use of the budget would include having the schools provide supplies to indigent children, and the teachers said they would spend money on guest speakers, aides, secretaries, substitutes, parent helpers, and additional teachers.

Four teachers spoke of the scheduling of activities (Note: This was part of the cues given in the question: "you have complete freedom to rearrange schedules...") They felt that flexibility in scheduling was the critical factor in successfully improving student learning, so that time would be available if needed to complete a lesson that would not fit a 55-minute time frame.

Six teachers saw the responsibility for improving student learning as resting primarily with teachers themselves, and they determined that they ought to do a number of things independent of the time they spent with students, in order to achieve that goal, such as performing needs assessments, observing and being observed by colleagues, comparing former students' test scores to state and local averages, getting professional development and improving workshops, and studying educational research.

Some teachers focused in on ideas to improve student learning early in the course of the interview; one teacher pointed out that when students see that a teacher believes in them, there is more learning. Another teacher emphasized the students' ability to learn, and said it was important they understand their strengths and weaknesses in order to develop the former and improve the latter.

Summary

Once again, a variety of responses characterized this question, but there was general optimism by the majority of the teachers to be able to influence this aspect of their job within the classroom environment in a restructured school. Their responses fell into four categories. 1) Eight teachers felt that students should be instrumental in their classroom learning, working cooperatively with others, and arriving at school prepared to learn. 2) More teacher control would be involved in the classroom-level changes, such as in the choice of meaningful activities, discipline, and evaluation considerations, areas discussed by nine teachers. 3) Six teachers considered uses of the budget to purchase materials or pay for personnel to help improve learning. And 4) six teachers also agreed upon areas in which the teacher had full responsibility, such as in professional development, examining past tests scores, working closely with colleagues, and identifying needs.

Most indicated quite clearly that it would not be possible to effect these changes under the present, constraining system, in light of the fact that schedules, curricula, class size, student participation, evaluation, etc. are not currently within the realm of teacher influence.

6b. Student Responsibility/Learning Orientation-Classroom Level

There are two aspects to this question which, while not mutually exclusive, are not necessarily complementary either, depending on the interpretation: 1) "to improve student responsibility" and 2) "to create a classroom with a learning orientation." The prompt, "What will you do differently?" led teachers to respond with remarks on what they, as opposed to the students, would do.

If one were to improve student responsibility, one would "do" certain things, said the teachers; however, this might not necessarily lead to the creation of a classroom with

a learning orientation. Conversely, if one were to address the problem of establishing a learning orientation, one might not forcibly "do" something to teach students more responsibility. In neither case, though, is this impossible; indeed it would be most desirable.

However, several of the teachers interviewed here seem to have focused on one or the other of the goals, partly because of the way the interviewer may have framed follow-up questions, partly because of the newness of the term "learning orientation as opposed to work orientation" or perhaps because they perceived one concept to be more important than the other either for themselves, or for us.

There may be no clear-cut line separating the two camps; in fact, several teachers appear to have incorporated both concepts in their remarks. We, therefore, simply draw attention to the fact that an interpretation based on several factors may be influencing the type of answers given here.

One teacher's responses, seem to naturally lead off this section; she centered immediately on the concept of learning-orientation, demonstrating examples of its opposite, "work-orientation," and discussed how the philosophy of education must change in order to get rid of that work orientation so prevalent, and often detrimental in schools.

"I would not teach advanced placement courses in the school because they are work-orientated... I would do away with the state-mandated curricula because they are work-oriented, because you've got these objectives that have to be taught by the end of the school year ... It is sort of a defeatist system, this 'work-oriented,' because it's like saying that every child works at the same rate, or pretending that's the way it is... That's not true.

I had a little girl yesterday tell me that her father told her that these were the best times of her life right now, to enjoy them. She says, 'I think this is horrible, the stress I'm under with these AP courses... I can't imagine what the rest of my life is going to be like.'

I think that every child wants to learn, and we are doing them a disservice when we teach them the way that we do, because... it's destroying their spirits, because they'd really love to learn."

Following these remarks, we note that clearly the most widely-held opinion expressed in this section was that teachers ought to make their lessons meaningful, interdisciplinary, integrated affairs, and when possible, with reinforcement of learning across subjects, as well as across the boundary between the formal educational environment and the "real" world.

Meaningful, interdisciplinary, "real" learning situations would include those affecting the community, such as landfills, air pollution, and nuclear energy; one teacher described her project of a Third World Meal; and well over half the teachers looked

across disciplines and outside the school walls to encourage a learning orientation, mentioning activities such as field trips and unit lessons which would encourage diversity, problem-solving, and demonstrate the importance of understanding the real world. Essentially, the students would learn to apply school knowledge to real life experiences.

Eight of the teachers were also very insistent on establishing lines of communication with the students, so that academic and/or personal matters could be discussed, and so that the students could be given choices, and have their needs addressed. The idea of having a small group, or having students work in a cooperative learning environment was essential, and thinking activities, whether they be in groups or handled individually, were also considered important in a learning-oriented classroom by most of the teachers.

Eliminating the pressures of schooling and making it fun and exciting was a theme four teachers emphasized. Other ideas included using known learning models, reinforcing earlier learning, rewarding high achievers, and eliminating tests, as one teacher felt they were not motivators for the children. The idea of professional development for not only the teachers was also considered:

"Have the whole, entire faculty and staff attend some sort of workshop or institute so that they understand the concept of teaching as a process, and get a serious commitment on the part of the faculty so that it's an integrated effort. Perhaps some of the parent leaders and some of the students would attend the same conference, and have a total workshop... That way students would feel more responsible about what they were doing, and know more about what's going on. When the students know what they can do, they do it."

When one teacher was specifically asked about what roles the students might play, she replied: "As peer tutors... As peer guidance helpers... They need a voice in discipline... with the teacher evaluations... in scheduling... If you could have enough student voice in it, then I definitely feel like they'll go along with it better."

Teachers other than the first one cited in this section also focused on ideas to improve student responsibility for learning and to establish a learning orientation early in the course of the interview. They mentioned the topics of smaller classes for more interaction, advisory groups for better communication, less telling and more asking from the teachers to encourage higher order thinking, a discipline model to minimize behavior problems, giving students choice so they would "own" their learning and duties, and including all members of the education process in a workshop to decide upon important matters directly affecting the students.

Summary

This question has provided us with numerous suggestions about how teachers would go about improving student responsibility and establishing a learning orientation, the most widely-held being the establishment of a meaningful, interdisciplinary curriculum emphasizing higher-level thinking and problem-solving activities in which

students could participate cooperatively, and which would be reinforced by all teachers. From inference regarding which topic the teacher was most likely to be addressing, we listed all their responses, acknowledging the fact that the teachers may have been addressing both the issue of student responsibility and that of learning orientation, or that we have unknowingly misinterpreted their replies:

Student Responsibility

- COOPERATIVE LEARNING
- FLEXIBILITY
- USE SMALL GROUPS
- INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION FROM THE TEACHER
- TEACHERS, PARENTS, STUDENTS, ADMINISTRATORS ATTEND WORKSHOPS TOGETHER
- PEER TUTORS AS TEACHERS
- ADVISORY GROUPS WITH STUDENTS AS HELPERS
- STUDENTS EVALUATE TEACHERS
- ESTABLISH A DISCIPLINE MODEL
- GIVE STUDENTS LOVE
- ALLOW STUDENT INPUT & CHOICE
- CONSEQUENCE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
- INVOLVE PARENTS
- TEACHER TRAINING

Learning Orientation

- ELIMINATE AP COURSES, STATE MANDATED CURRICULA & TESTS
- FLEXIBILITY
- MAKE LESSONS MEANINGFUL
- REINFORCE ACROSS SUBJECTS
- FIELD TRIPS/APPLICATION
- USE EXISTING LEARNING MODELS
- INTERDISCIPLINARY METHODS
- SHOW TRANSFERABILITY OF SKILLS/KNOWLEDGE
- TEACH PROBLEM-SOLVING AND HIGHER ORDER THINKING SKILLS
- MAKE LEARNING FUN
- INCORPORATE OUTSIDE MATERIALS AND SPEAKERS
- MAKE STUDY HALL INTO A "LEARNING PERIOD"
- USE EXISTING LEARNING MODELS
- TEACHER TRAINING

Conclusion

In an attempt to reduce the vast amount of information we have received on each of the issues discussed, we will step back and widen our viewing lens to get a more comprehensive picture of teachers' perceptions of school restructuring, with the emerging themes visible in the foreground, and the less frequently reported ideas as smaller details.

We noted enthusiasm, tempered on the part of some of the teachers by some skepticism or hesitation regarding various school-level changes, perhaps due to the fact that until recently, teachers had little say in the policies and decisions of their school, and were only powerful within relatively small contexts, their classrooms.

Each of the interviewees could see how teachers might be affected in a restructured school, but were not unanimous on how students might be affected. Many did not initially report that students would be touched by restructuring. They also perceived parents and administrators as being affected, parents providing more input for the most part, and administrators having to learn how to share authority and power with teachers and with others involved in site-based management.

At the school level, within the restructuring phenomenon, the teachers expected that they would be able to spend money on materials, space, and staff as needed. They would create a meaningful, interdisciplinary curriculum, and establish an open, relaxed school climate, providing themselves, as well as administrators, training in the new organizational decision-making processes and pedagogical methods that would be essential for successfully conducting the business of schooling. They would make schedules flexible, and spend more time on academic as opposed to clerical or housekeeping duties, teaching more higher-level thinking skills to students grouped differently according to the activity and/or ability and/or interest. They would maintain consistent school-wide discipline policies to allow everyone an equal and fair opportunity to learn, ideally producing students with increased self-confidence, intellectual curiosity, motivation to learn, and a willingness to help each other achieve such goals. Finally, the teachers hoped that students would recognize their instructors, their guides, as being 'human,' as well as just being their teachers.

At the classroom level, the teachers saw the teaching-learning process as an interdisciplinary, meaningful affair, allowing for flexibility in schedule and content, and involving cooperative learning activities. In this restructured environment there would be trust between students and teachers, and all parties would accept the shared responsibilities of teaching and learning in a community environment which itself would be honest, open, and understanding of differences instead of intolerant of them.

To improve student learning, the teachers echoed earlier remarks on the importance of interdisciplinary and integrated studies with meaningful projects on which all students could work, but in a context which many of the teachers felt they must regulate. Indeed, teacher control seemed important in this area, as it is they who would be the providers of tools with which students would build responsibility for their own learning; teachers

would create this interdisciplinary curriculum, the meaningful activities, the problem-solving situations, some of the student groupings, and be instrumental in establishing discipline policies, evaluation procedures and use of time. Over half the teachers also felt that students needed to be made an important part of this process, but this, too would have to be accomplished through work on the teachers' part.

In fact, in most of these teachers' responses indicated that they were willing to take upon their shoulders a tremendous amount of responsibility for every aspect of the students' lives, not only the academic occurring at school, but social, emotional, physical, family-related, job-related, sexual, health, and financial matters as well. If actually borne out in practice, teachers would be taking upon themselves Herculean tasks. And yet, it is seemingly not one of the teachers' duties which many of them would want to relinquish; improving student-teacher interactions by affording more time and even, as more than one teacher suggested, an advisory office hour scheduled into the day, would be one of their important goals, yet still secondary to increasing teaching responsibilities and reducing non-instructional duties and paperwork.

To increase student responsibility for learning, the teachers suggested different strategies, including new teaching, discipline, evaluation, grouping, and training techniques. These would often also contribute to the creation of a classroom with a learning orientation, in addition to such changes as the eradication of advanced placement courses, the incorporation of an interdisciplinary, integrated, and meaningful curriculum which could take place outside the classroom, the teaching of problem-solving skills, and more.

Yet despite the predominant tone of optimism, and perhaps idealism in the interviews, there were also signs of pessimism. Some teachers predicted reluctance from local administrators to share power, and after many years of teaching experience, and having seen teaching fads come and go, felt that the restructuring movement such as the one we defined, would not have much of an impact on their schools. Their responses at times echoed a complacency that suggested that they did not want to stir things up. At other moments during the interviews, they appeared simply resigned to their situations, deciding to make the best of them, and teach as well as they could in their "watertight bulkheads."

These few teachers foresaw increased interpersonal friction resulting from power conflicts, further isolation of teachers unable or unwilling to be a part of this new scheme, and no possibility of involving parents, since the teachers said they had lost interest in schools to such a degree that perhaps the process was irreversible. One teacher worried that restructuring just would not interest enough parents and community members to come to its "party."

However, whether these few are the teachers with the most accurate vision, or whether that honor belongs to the majority is impossible to determine at this point.

Basically, this study has demonstrated the value of listening to teacher voices regarding the decisions made to restructure schools. Such work provides information

from the "inside" out, instead of the traditional "outside" looking in point of view, giving a fuller, richer picture of life inside the classroom, and a better idea of what issues we need to attend to in the future. As such, it is also part of our "ways of knowing" which contribute to the knowledge of how restructuring in schools may or may not lead to fundamental changes in teaching and learning. These teachers, as well as others around the country, must be given a forum for their potentially invaluable contributions of experience and knowledge, vision and creativity in efforts at restructuring the nation's schools.

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Date Filmed

March 29, 1991